

Serial No. 09/492,558

HRT 233

1. (Currently Amended) Apparatus for stabilizing an epicardial surface of the heart, comprising:

a shaft; and

a foot coupled to the shaft, the foot having a first arm, a second arm, and a space between the first and second arms, the first and second arms each having a contact surface for engaging the heart, a proximal end, a distal end and a length defined between the proximal and distal ends and within a plane defined by the bottom surface of said foot, the length of the first arm being longer than the length of the second arm, and wherein the foot has a bottom surface, the bottom surface including the contact surface of the first and second arms, the contact surface generally lying in the plane, the bottom surface also having lateral surfaces that taper away from the plane.

2. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein:

the first arm is at least 30% longer than the second arm.

3. (Cancelled)

4. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for stabilizing an epicardial surface of the heart comprising:

a shaft; and

a foot coupled to the shaft, the foot having a generally planar first arm and a generally planar second arm, a contact surface for engaging the heart and a slot in which a vessel on the heart may be positioned, the slot being aligned with a central axis, the foot having a shape which is asymmetrical relative to the central axis.

5. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 4, wherein:

~~the foot includes a first arm, and a second arm that is shaped differently compared to the first arm.~~

6-13. (Cancelled)

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14. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for stabilizing an epicardial surface of the heart comprising:

a foot including a bottom surface having a contact surface for engaging the heart, a slot in which a vessel on the heart may be positioned, wherein at least a portion of the bottom surface is generally convex; ~~where the foot is generally convex when as~~ viewed along a central axis defined by the slot, and the bottom surface has lateral surfaces which taper away from the contact surface.

15. (Original) The apparatus of claim 14, wherein:

the lateral surfaces taper away within an angle of 2-15 degrees.

16. (Cancelled)

17. (Currently Amended) A method of performing a coronary anastomosis on a heart of a patient comprising:

providing a stabilizer having a foot that includes a bottom surface having a contact surface for engaging the heart, a slot in which a vessel on the heart may be positioned, and wherein at least a portion of the bottom surface is generally convex as viewed along a central axis defined by the slot, and the bottom surface has lateral surfaces that taper away from the contact surface ~~a shaft and a foot, the foot having a first arm, a second arm, and a slot therebetween;~~

accessing a coronary artery on the patient's heart;

placing the foot in engagement with the heart so that the coronary artery is positioned in the slot and the first arm retracting the apex of the heart; and

performing an anastomosis on the coronary artery.

18. (Original) The method of claim 17, wherein:

the placing step is carried out with the coronary artery being an artery selected from arteries in the group consisting of the circumflex and branches of the right coronary arteries.

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19. (Currently Amended) A method of performing coronary anastomoses on a heart of a patient comprising:

providing a stabilizer system having a shaft, a first foot and a second foot having a shape different than the first foot;

coupling the first foot to the shaft;

placing the first foot in engagement with the heart so as to stabilize the surface thereof;

performing an anastomosis on a first coronary artery which is stabilized by the first foot;

decoupling the first foot from the shaft;

coupling the second foot to the shaft;

placing the second foot in engagement with the heart so as to stabilize the surface thereof; and

performing an anastomosis on the second coronary artery with the second foot stabilizing the second coronary artery.

20-48 (Cancelled)

49. (Previously Added) An apparatus for stabilizing an epicardial surface of the heart, comprising:

a foot having a first arm and a second arm, each of said first and second arms having a proximal end and a distal end, said first and second arms each attached to said foot at their respective proximal ends;

said first and second arms each having at least one contact surface for engaging the heart;

a space between said first and second arms, said space defining a slot, said slot defining a long axis of said foot;

said first and second arms each having a lateral surface attached thereto, said lateral surface tapering away from said contact surface to be generally convex when viewed along said axis of said slot.

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50. (Previously Added) The apparatus according to claim 49, further comprising a length defined between the proximal ends of said first and second arms and the distal ends of said first and second arms, said length of the first arm being longer than the length of said second arm.

51. (Previously Added) The apparatus according to claim 50, wherein the length of said first arm is at least 30% longer than said second arm.

52. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 14. ~~An apparatus for stabilizing an epicardial surface of the heart,~~ comprising:

a shaft;

the a-foot has ~~having~~ a first arm, said first arm having a proximal end and a distal end, and a second arm, said second arm having a proximal end and a distal end, said first and second arms each attached to said foot at their respective proximal ends;

~~said first and second arms each having at least one contact surface for engaging the heart;~~

a space between said first and second arms, said space defining a slot, said slot defining a long axis of said foot; and

a connector for detachably engaging the foot to the shaft, said connector located along a lateral side of said foot, and forming an axis which makes an angle with said long axis of said foot.

53. (Previously Added) The apparatus of claim 52, wherein said angle is between about 50-90 degrees.

54. (Previously Added) The apparatus of claim 53, wherein said angle is about 70 degrees.